

Logo/Branding

[If you're writing on behalf of an organisation, this supports an awareness of your brand. If you're an artist writing for yourself, it might be best to leave the space blank – it probably shouldn't look like it comes from you.]

PRESS RELEASE

[It always helps to spell things out.]

Date

[You could also put this at the beginning of the main section of text, as long as it's somewhere. Bear in mind that whoever receives it might well have it sitting on their desk for a few days before they pick it up, so the date helps them place it.]

[Headline

This should capture all the important things about the project in a single sentence – the 'who' and 'what'. It should stand out in bold and a bigger font and shouldn't be longer than two lines, without a full-stop at the end. Some people use caps for every word or the whole sentence but I think that's a bit shouty – the clarity of the thought should make the impact]

New template offers musicians chance to create their own press releases and generate publicity for free

[Bullets

This is my way of doing it – not everyone does it like this, but I think it's a great way of focusing the most important information in the smallest amount of space in the most-read part of the page.]

- These are the key things about the project and what makes it special
- What is unique about what you're doing?
- Anniversaries, oldest, youngest, premieres, celebrities, first, last, historical, unusual, controversial, celebratory, inspiring
- Flag up anything that's new
- Bullet points shouldn't be longer than two lines
- Don't need to be full sentences
- Offer alternative angles to make it easy for the editor to choose a story
- Reorder these according to recipient, with more or less detail as necessary, starting off with most relevant to them
- No more than ten bullet points

[Main text

You could put the date of the release and the location here, especially if you're contacting international media.] This is where you can start talking about your project, but the first paragraph should read like a news story – state the who, what, why, where and when.

Now you can go into more detail – discuss the repertoire, artists, reasons, artistic vision. It should be clear and well-structured, covering one thing at a time. Avoid long sentences, keep the adjectives at bay and try to keep the tone informative and objective (see my commentary).

When discussing artists, don't be gushy or pretentious – stay neutral and back up any claims with evidence. Use press quotes about them, as long as these are relevant and not too old – the more famous the outlet the better. Highlight anything in the artists' careers that makes them well placed to be involved in this project specifically. If you're discussing more than one artist, you might want to bold their **names** so they stand out.

If you're presenting unusual repertoire, say something about when and why it was written, and maybe include a press quote about it, or about the composer, which offers a specific insight. Google is your friend – but don't EVER cut and paste from Wikipedia. Again, find the unusual, surprising details that might appeal to readers. Are you using a new edition? Are you doing something no one has done before?

*Ariane Todes says, 'I believe that artists have a responsibility – a duty, even – to provide engaging quotes about their projects, really getting to the heart of what they're doing and engaging an audience that doesn't necessarily know anything about classical music. These quotes should be informative and specific rather than generic or arrogant. They don't have to sound too formal and can be a bit quirky. The more interesting and useful a quote is, the more likely it is that an editor will use it lock, stock and barrel. **Always make sure that within your quote text is one killer sentence that sums up your project, is perhaps a little quirky, and can easily be lifted for a news story.** You might even want to bold that sentence.*

These quotes can also be used across marketing material and programmes, and are a really good way to engaged people in classical music. I've even seen how an interesting quote in a press release can feed through to the review and shape the critic's whole perception of the project, so this text can be incredibly powerful. As an editor, I usually ignored boring quotes that went on about how wonderful everything was, so be profound, inspiring, honest and maybe even provocative.'

You might want to end with some sort of concluding thought about your hopes for the project and any future ideas, to show you've got a strategy and it isn't just a one-off. This also means that if the editor has missed the deadline for this story, they might still be interested in your next project.

Notes for editors

[This is where you can put the context and detail that is important for whoever is writing the story but might get in the way of the pitch, so it's useful to put it altogether at the end.]

About the organisation

This can be a bit about the history of the group, who runs it, how it works, what it plays and anything else that makes it special, and any good press quotes. If you're writing as a solo musician, you could use this bit for your biography, so that you don't load the main text with too much about you.

About [any other associated organisations]

This could be about patrons, funders, venues – any useful detail that might add to the story.

Dates

If you've got a series of events, this is the place to put all the details: time, date, location, repertoire etc. Make sure any listing is completely consistent, with times and dates always in the same format. It's worth triple checking this, as it's a place where mistakes easily creep in.

Contact

Ideally there would be one contact point for the press, to avoid confusion, but a few different ways of getting in touch with them: email and phone at the very least. If it's you running your own press, you might want to set up a press@ account so it doesn't feel awkward. But by the time they've gone for the story, it shouldn't really matter anyway. This is also the place to offer press tickets.

Resources

If you have a link to hi-res photos, you can add that here. Include any website information and social media accounts.